AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (original) In a baseball videogame, wherein animated action is performed by a pitcher character in response to input by a user provided through a user-operable controller, a method of controlling game play comprising:

monitoring for user input on the user-operable controller requesting release of a baseball pitch by the pitcher character;

detecting when user input is requested on the user-operable controller requesting release of the baseball pitch by the pitcher character;

comparing a time at which the user input is detected to an optimal pitch release timing; and

controlling a timing of a break on the baseball pitch based on the comparison.

2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the timing of the break on the baseball pitch occurs relatively early in its flight when the time at which the user input is detected occurs earlier than the optimal pitch release timing.

3.   (original)   The method of claim 1 wherein the timing of the break on the baseball pitch occurs relatively late in its flight when the time at which the user input is detected occurs at or during the optimal pitch release timing.

4.   (original)   The method of claim 1 wherein the timing of the break on the baseball pitch will result in the pitch being outside of a batter character's strike zone when the time at which the user input is detected occurs after the optimal pitch release timing.

5.   (original)   The method of claim 1 wherein the optimal pitch release timing is a period of time.

6.   (original)   The method of claim 5 wherein the amount of time in the period of time forming the optimal pitch timing is variable.

7.   (original)   The method of claim 6 wherein the amount of time in the period of time is varied based on performance statistics of the pitcher character.

8.   (original)   The method of claim 6 wherein the amount of time in the period of time is varied based on a type of pitch selected by input on the user-operable controller that controls the action performed by the pitcher character.

9.   (original)   A method of controlling game play in a baseball videogame, wherein a user interactively controls a pitcher character in response to input by a user provided through a user-operable controller, the method comprising:

monitoring for user input on the user-operable controller requesting release of a baseball pitch by the pitcher character;

detecting when user input is requested on the user-operable controller requesting release of the baseball pitch by the pitcher character;

comparing a time at which the user input is detected to an optimal pitch release timing; and

controlling when a break on the baseball pitch occurs during its flight based on the comparison.

10.   (original)   The method of claim 9 wherein the break on the baseball pitch occurs relatively early in its flight when the time at which the user input is detected occurs earlier than the optimal pitch release timing.

11.   (original)   The method of claim 9 wherein the break on the baseball pitch occurs relatively late in its flight when the time at which the user input is detected occurs at or during the optimal pitch release timing.

12.   (original)   The method of claim 9 wherein the break on the baseball pitch will result in the pitch being outside of a batter character's strike zone if the time at which the user input is detected occurs after the optimal pitch release timing.

13.   (original)   The method of claim 9 wherein the optimal pitch release timing is a period of time.

14.   (original)   The method of claim 13 wherein an amount of time in the period of time forming the optimal pitch timing is variable.

15.   (original)   The method of claim 14 wherein the amount of time in the period of time is varied based on performance statistics of the pitcher character.

16.   (original)   The method of claim 14 wherein the amount of time in the period of time is varied based on a type of pitch selected by input on the user-operable controller that controls the action performed by the pitcher character.

17.   (original)   In a baseball videogame, wherein animated action is performed by a pitcher baseball game character in response to input by a user provided through a user-operable controller, a method of controlling game play comprising:

displaying and activating a pitch release meter so that the pitch release meter approaches a target;

monitoring for user input on the user-operable controller requesting release of a baseball pitch by the pitcher character;

detecting the position of the release meter when user input is requested on the user-operable controller requesting release of the baseball pitch by the pitcher character;

comparing the detected position of the release meter to the target; and

controlling when a break on the baseball pitch occurs during its flight based on the comparison.

18.   (original)   The method of claim 17 wherein the break on the baseball pitch occurs relatively early in its flight if the detected position of the release meter has not yet reached the target.

19.   (original)   The method of claim 17 wherein the break on the baseball pitch occurs relatively late in its flight if the detected position of the release meter is at or within the target.

20.   (original)   The method of claim 17 wherein the break on the baseball pitch will result in the pitch being outside of a batter character's strike zone when the detected position of the release meter has passed the target.

21.   (original)   The method of claim 17 wherein the target comprises a target zone.

22.   (original)   The method of claim 21 wherein a range of the target zone is variable.

23.   (original)   The method of claim 22 wherein the range of the target zone is varied based on performance statistics of the pitcher character.

24. (original) The method of claim 23 wherein the range of the target zone is varied based on a type of pitch selected by input on the user-operable controller that controls the action performed by the pitcher character.

25.-103. (canceled)